

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:7-11

When the Lord returns, He will first remove his bride from the earth. This we call the rapture of the church. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

We looked at this last week and asked some logical questions. When will the rapture take place? It is imminent, meaning that we are to expect it to happen at any time. It is next on God’s calendar of events, but the date is secret. We cannot know. **Acts 1:7**, “And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”

What will happen at the rapture? There will be a resurrection of the dead in Christ, and there will be a departure from the earth. There will be a reunion with loved ones and with Jesus Himself. What should we do to prepare? You must be born again.

Immediately following the rapture, as the tribulation begins to unfold here on earth, we who are taken at the rapture will begin appearing before the Lord at His judgment seat to receive our rewards for service.

This judgment seat is a “bema” seat. Originally it was for the purpose of rewarding participants in athletic events. In the Grecian games in Athens, the old arena contained a raised platform on which the president or umpire of the arena sat. From there he rewarded all the contestants and all winners. It was called the “bema” or “reward seat.” The ideas associated with this word are prominence, dignity, authority, honor, and reward. This term was never used of a judicial bench where judgment was meted out for crimes committed.

I. THE LORD JESUS IS THE JUDGE.

A. He has the right to exercise divine authority in judgment.

John 5:22, 27, “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:” “And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.”

B. He is qualified to judge His own.

1. *Because He became one of us.*
2. *Because He endured all the trials and temptations Himself.*
3. *Because He paid for our sin and bought us back from death.*

C. He is perfectly just in His judgment.

John 5:30, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” **Hebrews 4:13**, “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

II. THIS JUDGMENT IS EXCLUSIVELY OF HIS BRIDE.

A. The Old Testament saints will be raised and rewarded after the tribulation.

B. The tribulation martyrs will be raised and rewarded after the tribulation (Rev. 20:4-6).

III. THIS JUDGMENT IS FOR REWARDING HIS BRIDE.

Ephesians 5:27, “That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” **2 Corinthians 5:10**, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.” The word “appear” means to make manifest or to reveal the character and motive of each individual.

A. Salvation is not in question.

B. Sins are not being judged.

1. Our sins are judged here on earth.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32, “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

2. Our sins may have produced some serious consequences that affect this judgment.

Galatians 6:7-8, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

- a. Lot's compromise caused two cities to go to hell.
- b. Abraham's impatience produced a nation that rejects God.
- c. David's adultery and murder caused men to blaspheme God.

C. Works are being judged (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

1. All our works will be publicly displayed to determine if good or bad.

- a. The bad works are worthless ones, not worthy of reward.
- b. The good works are ones that are acceptable and worthy of reward.

2. All our works will be tried by the judgment fire of God.

- a. The bad or worthless works will be burned up.
 - 1) Works done by our own power instead of the Spirit's power
 - 2) Works done for self glory
 - 3) Works done in service to money rather than to God

Matthew 6:24, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” **Luke 6:22-24**, “Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.”

- 4) Works that comprise the truth

2 John 1:10-11, “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” Two things lead to compromise, fear of man and personal gain.

- b. The bad or worthless works will result in loss of reward.

1 Corinthians 3:15, “If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” **2 John 1:8**, “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”

3. All our works that withstand the fire will be rewarded (wage or dues paid for work).

1 Corinthians 3:14, “If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.”

- a. Commendation

Matthew 25:23, “His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

- b. Positions of leadership

Luke 19:17, “And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.”

- c. Crowns to honor the Lord

- 1) The incorruptible crown for mastery over the flesh

1 Corinthians 9:25, “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”

- 2) The crown of rejoicing for soul winners

1 Thessalonians 2:19, “For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”

3) The crown of life for enduring trials

James 1:12, “Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

4) The crown of righteousness for loving his appearing

2 Timothy 4:8, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

5) The crown of glory for feeding the flock of God

1 Peter 5:4, “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

Our purpose is to glorify Christ. The crowns are not for our glory but for His. These crowns will then be placed at the feet of Jesus.

1 John 2:28, “And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”